

House Republican Press Release

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Legislature Approves Rep. Urban's Tick Control Bill



Would Allow Communities To Fund Initiatives Similar To Stonington Program

On Tuesday, May 24, the State Senate unanimously approved legislation introduced by State Representative Diana Urban, R-North Stonington, that would allow towns to create funding mechanisms for tick control measures. House Bill 6475, An Act Concerning The Powers Of Special Districts, now to Governor M. Jodi Rell for final approval.

By allowing for the creating of special taxing districts, bill would allow communities to fund programs similar to a pilot project in Mason's Island in Stonington, said Rep. Urban. She noted that Ruth Waller, of Mason's Island, did a tremendous job in putting together a team for the project, which involved applying a non-toxic substance to mice that later repelled ticks.

"The pilot program was very successful in reducing deer ticks on Mason's Island and this legislation would enable communities throughout Connecticut to establish similar, environmentally safe, tick removal programs," said Rep. Urban, who serves as a member of the Legislature's Environment Committee. "Reducing ticks can directly lower instances of Lyme Disease and these kinds of preventative measures are proven to save health care costs. This program can serve as a model for any community that wants to be environmentally-conscious in addressing their tick problems. It is always a great experience for a legislator to work hand in hand with constituents on such a positive initiative."

According to the non-partisan Office of Legislative Research (OLR), while HB 6475 allows special taxing districts to implement tick control measures, existing law already allows such districts to provide for a wide range of municipal services, including fire protection, street lighting, road repair, and flood control. It allows towns to fund these services by levying property taxes and issuing bonds backed by the taxes and other district revenue. The authority to provide tick control applies to districts operating under the statutes, not to those operating under special acts.

Special taxing districts differ based on who created them. Until the 1890s, the legislature created most of the districts by special acts, which it enacted on behalf of the residents of an area that wanted a specific service. This method allowed the legislature to customize

the district's powers and structure to suit the residents' needs. In 1893, the legislature enacted statutes allowing residents to establish, organize, and operate districts on their own without requesting special acts.